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RUEHBY/AMEMBASSY CANBERRA PRIORITY 0922
RUEHPB/AMEMBASSY PORT MORESBY PRIORITY 3369
RUEHWL/AMEMBASSY WELLINGTON PRIORITY 1603
RUEHHM/AMCONSUL HO CHI MINH CITY PRIORITY 0187
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHDC PRIORITY
RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC PRIORITY
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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 03 JAKARTA 001972

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [KISL](#) [PHUM](#) [ID](#)

SUBJECT: ISLAMIC PARTY CANDIDATE MAKES STRIDES IN JAKARTA
GOVERNOR'S RACE

REF: A. JAKARTA 1157

[1](#)B. 06 JAKARTA 13419

[1](#)C. 06 JAKARTA 11376

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Classified By: (U) Classified By: Joseph L. Novak, Counselor for Political Affairs, reasons: 1.4 (b) and (d).

SUMMARY

[1](#)1. (C) In what is shaping up to be a closer race for Jakarta governor than initially anticipated, former Jakarta Deputy Police Chief and PKS (the fastest growing Islamist party in Indonesia) candidate Adang Daradjatun has reportedly narrowed the gap on Vice Governor Fauzi Bowo, the coalition party candidate. According to contacts, Adang's gubernatorial bid was progressing to the point that many believed that he could win the August 8 election. Though a July 19 poll gave Fauzi a sizeable lead, another reputable poll indicated that Adang was viewed more favorably than Fauzi on a number of key issues like corruption. Even a close loss would allow PKS to claim a moral victory, while outright victory would likely give the party -- and political Islam in Indonesia more generally -- an infusion of momentum and confidence. END SUMMARY.

WHY FAUZI STARTED AS THE FAVORITE

[1](#)2. (C) As reported in Ref A, until very recently, conventional wisdom in Jakarta held that Vice Governor Fauzi Bowo would resoundingly defeat Adang Daradjatun and capture the governorship of this city of nearly 10 million people. Fauzi secured the loyalty of 18 of the 19 largest parties in Jakarta, snuffed out other potential competitors, leveraged the advantages inherent in running as a virtual incumbent, and had a level of name recognition that Adang could not match. Though PKS constituted the largest party in Jakarta, having secured 25 percent of the local legislative seats in the 2004 election, party contacts told us PKS endorsed Adang's candidacy primarily because he gave the party between 15 and 25 billion rupiah (\$1,666,666 - \$2,750,000), not because of any compelling ideological overlap. Most people believed that by purportedly auctioning off its support to the highest bidder, PKS, the party that made its mark through

its self-proclaimed dedication to clean governance, had forfeited its primary advantage in the election: the moral high ground.

PKS GAINING GROUND?

13. (C) In recent weeks, our contacts have reported a palpable shift in the race. Poempida Hidayatulloh, the Golkar party's Deputy Treasurer, told us that Golkar officials viewed the race as a virtual "toss-up." (Note: Golkar is the fourth largest party in Jakarta.) When we pressed Poempida for his own best guess on the outcome, Poempida predicted that heavy turnout would result in a Fauzi Bowo victory, while anything below 50 percent would translate into victory for Adang and PKS. Low voter turnout would favor PKS, he reasoned, because the party's sophisticated grassroots network would mobilize most of the party's eligible voters to cast a ballot for Adang on election-day. While non-PKS party members would vote in disproportionate numbers for Fauzi, Fauzi would not be able to count on the same base level of support that Adang could bank on. As a result, Poempida asserted, Fauzi would have to hope for a high voter turnout to counterbalance PKS's energized base. Mobilizing voters from the 18 parties unified behind Fauzi Bowo's candidacy had proven difficult, he added, because none of the parties that had endorsed Fauzi viewed him as "their candidate" in the way that PKS identified with Adang. The net result was that no one had taken ownership of Fauzi's campaign, and coordination between the parties had proven difficult.

14. (C) When we asked Pramono Anung, the Secretary General of the Indonesian Democratic Party - Struggle (PDI-P), how he saw the race shaping up, he expressed grave concerns about the possibility of an Adang victory. Pramono emphasized that while PDI-P believed Adang had run an impressive race and clearly put a dent in Fauzi's lead, party officials from

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former president Megawati on down still believed that Fauzi would win. Nevertheless, according to Pramono, Megawati was monitoring the election very closely, and had even gone so far as to appear in a series of television campaign spots for Fauzi. Where Golkar, the Democratic Party, and many of the junior partners in the Fauzi coalition were perhaps not overly invested in the outcome of the race, PDI-P viewed the prospect of a PKS victory as a serious threat not only to Jakarta, but to the nation as a whole. Universally viewed as an ascendant Islamic political powerhouse after registering impressive results in the 2004 legislative elections, PKS had come back down to earth after joining SBY's coalition and becoming "just another political party" in the eyes of many. Pramono told us that PDI-P liked it that way, and feared a victory in the governor's race would revitalize PKS and give the party a high profile platform on which to campaign for the national legislative elections in 2009. Almost as if to underscore the point, Megawati called Pramono during Poloff's one-on-one meeting, and could be overheard on the cellphone expressing in Bahasa Indonesia her concerns about a Kompas newspaper poll showing Adang with higher favorability ratings. For PDI-P, as the most secular nationalist party in the country, the objective was clear: stop PKS in its tracks.

15. (C) According to a contact with President Yudhoyono's Democratic Party, the second largest party in Jakarta, Adang could no longer be considered the underdog in the election. Indonesian legislator Vera Febyanthi told us that Adang's willingness to spend seemingly limitless amounts of money to raise his profile had clearly put him in contention. Adang also came across as a far more charismatic figure than Fauzi (Fauzi is considered a bit stolid). According to Vera, the election would be very close, and everyone within the Democratic Party feared the repercussions of a PKS victory. (Note: President Yudhoyono has not expressed a preference for either candidate. End Note).

16. (C) Gembong Priyono, a senior aide to Vice President Kalla, echoed the belief that Adang had put himself in position to win with his late surge. He reported to us that Vice President Kalla was watching the race very closely in his capacity as the Chairman of Golkar and an interested observer, but Kalla did not think the results would impact the national electoral map in any meaningful way. Gembong, like Kalla, believed the election would turn on local issues and not national political trends, and suggested the results should be interpreted accordingly.

PKS WARY OF THE POSSIBILITY OF WINNING

17. (C) PKS legislator Zulkieflimansyah told us internal PKS polling indicated that Adang had pulled to within seven percentage points of Fauzi Bowo. Adang had surprised PKS party leaders with his campaigning skills and his ability to broaden his appeal beyond PKS party cadre. Even more unexpected, according to Zulkieflimansyah, was Adang's willingness to bankroll the campaign. Zulkieflimansyah said that Adang had already spent 80-100 billion rupiah (\$9,000,000 - \$11,000,000 million) of his own money on the campaign, an inordinate amount for a local campaign, even in Jakarta. Fauzi Bowo, he was quick to add, had undoubtedly spent more however.

18. (C) Reiterating the comments he made to us in Refs A and C, Zulkieflimansyah noted that PKS had selected Adang as its candidate because he was able to provide the party with a much needed infusion of cash. PKS leadership never thought Adang, who was recruited by the Prosperous Justice Party (PKS) from outside the party ranks, could win. His sudden surge in the polls had made some factions within the party uneasy. If Adang were to win the election, he would quickly become the national face of the party, and PKS would be held accountable for his inevitable missteps as the chief executive of Indonesia's least governable city. The genie was out of the bottle to a certain extent, and though the PKS machinery would turn out the vote for Adang on August 8, more than a few members of the party discreetly hoped his gubernatorial bid would ultimately come up short. When we jokingly asked whether some senior PKS leaders might end up

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voting for Fauzi Bowo, he told us without a trace of humor that undoubtedly many would.

COMMENT

19. (C) Even a close loss would allow PKS to claim a moral victory, while an outright win would provide the party with a much needed infusion of momentum and confidence. Although Adang is by no means considered an ardent Islamist, his victory would give PKS a signature electoral triumph in Indonesia's highest profile local election ever. PKS may have mixed emotions about the desirability of governing Jakarta, but as the capital city and media hub for this sprawling country of nearly a quarter of a billion people, Jakarta would give PKS the perfect strategic foothold to advance its ambitious plans for expansion.

HUME